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The Gift
of
Henry Barrett Learned
to
Stanford University

# CHARLES W. ELIOT

PRESIDENT OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Charles W. Eliot

# CHARLES W. ELIOT

PRESIDENT OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY
(MAY 19, 1869 — MAY 19, 1909)

BY

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OF BRESLAU

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To My Wife

AS THE FAITHFUL COMRADE
IN OUR AMERICAN CAMPAIGN
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE
THESE PAGES

## NOTE.

*This essay was originally written for the Deutsche Rundschau of Berlin, and will appear in its May and June numbers as an homage of Germany to President Eliot on his retirement from office and at the same time to America in the person of her representative educator. The translation is by my dear friend Dr. A. W. Boesche, Instructor in German at Harvard University, whom I wish to thank for his kind help and coöperation, not only in this translation, but also in my university work at Harvard. Twice during the last three years, in* 1906–1907 *and* 1908–1909, *I have had the honor of holding the post of German interchange professor at Harvard University. Hence this little essay should be regarded as a fruit of the intellectual exchange movement between Germany and America. It claims to be no more than a modest expression of the sincere striving for mutual understanding which we hope will bring good to both nations.*

*E. K.*

CAMBRIDGE, *April* 21, 1909.

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# CHARLES W. ELIOT, PRESIDENT OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

HARDLY had the excitement of last year's presidential campaign subsided, when the attention of the whole country was again aroused by the news that Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, would resign his office in May, 1909, two score years after he was called to the head of America's oldest university. It is not too much to say that his resignation impressed not only the educated circles of New England, but those of the whole country, fully as much as the important political event. Indeed there were not a few in whose estimation the impending change at Harvard outranked in importance that at Washington. Since Eliot entered upon his office, the United States has had eight presidents. Harvard retained its great administrator, and, being the oldest and most prominent

college in the land, became through him the leading university in America.

This implies more under American conditions than it would mean in Germany. America had no traditions to give the term university a perfectly fixed and clear meaning, suggesting the more or less complete fulfilment of duties recognized and undisputed in themselves. On the contrary, the whole university idea was still to be developed here, not, indeed, after some foreign, as, for instance, the German pattern, but with careful regard to the special needs of America. The American university is in the fullest sense of the word a new creation which is still in the making. For this very reason, however, the development of the new university idea became a determining factor in the whole educational progress of the country. As the creator of Harvard University President Eliot became at the same time the most influential personality in the whole history of American education. The American people, more perhaps than any other nation in the world, are quickened in all strata of society by a supreme faith in the importance

and power of education. A truly feverish craving for instruction and knowledge animates all classes. Education is conceived as the most important structural element in the edifice of democracy. Education and self-education mean the development of self-centring, independent personalities, without which free institutions cannot endure. Hence education is of all the social duties of America the most urgent. Not until this is fully understood, can the national importance of President Eliot's labors be appreciated. While shaping and guiding the destinies of Harvard University, he has always been conscious of being at the same time in the service of his people and of democracy. In this spirit he has taken the widest and most active interest in the great public questions of American life. Without ever holding public office, as the head of a wholly private institution — for such is Harvard in its complete independence of local, state or federal authorities — he has for more than a generation been a force in the nation's life. Again and again one hears or sees him characterized in America as "our first private

citizen" or as "our greatest moral force as an individual."

The evolution of Harvard University is the most important among those chapters of American history that have so far received too scant attention abroad. The figure of President Eliot has now, for a long time, belonged not to Harvard nor even to New England alone, but to his country as a whole. Such a man properly challenges the attention of Germany and of the whole world.

# I

## THE UNIVERSITY AT THE TIME OF ELIOT'S INAUGURATION

Charles W. Eliot was 35 years old and Professor of Analytical Chemistry in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, when the Corporation of Harvard University, the governing body of that institution, elected him President. Their choice required confirmation by the Board of Overseers, a sort of revisory body. This confirmation was at first denied, but, when the Corporation stood its ground, finally granted.

The oldest American institution of learning, founded in 1636 primarily for the purpose of supplying the Colony with thoroughly educated ministers of the church, presented in 1869 an undeveloped and somewhat chaotic condition. The college proper, the oldest and most important part of the institution, was, in every essential feature, a school, of the type of the German Gymnasium. As to-day,

its curriculum covered four years. Its entrance requirements were decidedly modest. For the first two years practically all, for the last two about half of the courses of study were prescribed. This largely obligatory curriculum laid the chief stress on Latin, Greek and Mathematics, with which a few courses in Natural Science were organically coördinated. Everything else was as yet in a primitive stage of development. Such was the character of an institution ranking as the great school of general education, of a higher liberal culture, the nucleus for the growth of intellectual refinement in America.

Connected with the college was a group of special schools for the learned professions, the peculiar feature of their interrelation being the total lack of organic coherence. To illustrate: if one wanted to make of himself a clergyman, physician, lawyer or judge, there was no need of one's first passing through the college proper. The School of Divinity required for admission no more than the ordinary high school certificate, the value of which we are probably overrating if we compare its holders (at the time of

which we are speaking) to German boys ready for the Prima or even only Secunda of the German Gymnasium. The Medical School exacted practically no entrance qualifications at all, and the Law School did not do much better, while the various schools of Engineering, Practical Chemistry, Mining, etc., dealt with this question of admission without uniformity or fixed system. The Dental School had a hard struggle for existence, while a school for Agriculture or a Veterinary College did not exist. None of those professional schools gave their students much more than a practical drill; they whipped their men into shape for their life work by whatever method proved quickest and easiest. Such connection as they had with one another and with the college was of the loosest character; some of them virtually had their own government, their own financial administration, and there actually existed a sort of personal freedom from responsibility to the President. They did not even have the same academic year and the same vacations.

Nothing short of a radical reform could mend matters. It was not enough to remodel

into one uniform organization all of these scattered fragments of wholly heterogeneous institutions furnishing everything from a general education to all imaginable varieties of professional training. A new spirit had to be infused into this new organism. There had to be a complete change of methods as well as of aims, and, what was still more, a raising of the standards of work was imperatively needed in all the departments. The easy-going pursuit of prescribed courses was to give way to real study, determined by the student's own resolution and on his own responsibility. The drill system with its merely practical aims was to be replaced by a thoroughly scholarly training befitting the dignity and importance of the learned professions.

But the most urgent task was to determine the proper relation between general education and professional training. Only those possessed of a general education, acquired by independently chosen study in the college, were to be admitted to the professional schools. That was the final aim. Truly, the very con-

ception of American education was involved in the momentous decision of these questions. Nowhere but in a university could they be decided, and the university that assumed the leadership and created the standard for all others, became thereby the embodiment of the American conception of education. It enthroned ideal in the place of utilitarian considerations, it aimed at seriousness and depth of genuine education independently won instead of the hurried acquisition of mere practical accomplishments. All of this was attained by just one decisive move: the introduction into the American university of the spirit of true education, of the spirit of liberty and independence, in place of the traditional routine. Indeed, without this infusion of a new spirit, not even an outward unity of organization could have been accomplished. To carry out the latter required a great administrator and organizer, a real statesman of education, and to evolve it out of that revolution of spirit, method and attitude of which we have spoken, called for a statesman of intellectuality and true culture.

## II

### THE COLLEGE UNDER ELIOT'S ADMINISTRATION

The whole American university system is, to a certain extent, determined by the goal to which its courses of study are directed: the attainment of certain degrees. Among these the degree of Bachelor of Arts stands for graduation from the college proper. The requirements which any college exacts for this degree determine at the same time the standard and value of work done by the teachers as well as students of such college.

It was here that the entering wedge of the whole reform and reorganization could be applied. The fundamental idea was, in brief, that all the professional schools must, in course of time, become schools for graduates only, or in other words, they were to grant admission only to the possessors of the Bachelor's degree. At the same time the requirements for this degree were to be raised so as to make its

holders men of unquestionably genuine liberal education and exponents of the true spirit of scholarship. Naturally, as the college improved the standard of its final degree, it was compelled to raise correspondingly its entrance requirements. Thus the reform within the university resulted in higher demands upon the secondary schools from which the university drew its students, and Harvard University assumed the leadership in this great upward movement of American education.

The magic stroke which gave new life to the college in all its activities was the determined extension of the elective system to almost the whole list of studies, that is to say, it was left to the student to designate the courses he desired to pursue. The first determined steps toward this radical reform date back as far as 1865, four years before Eliot's assumption of the presidency, but it was he who carried it to its utmost consequence. The prescribed curriculum gradually disappeared, except for a few hours in the first college year. Manifestly, what the change really meant was the transition from school instruction to academic study.

The freedom of choice naturally implied a large number of subjects to choose from, and this, combined with the steady progress of specialization, has resulted in a constantly widening range of studies, until now the college embraces the whole realm of human knowledge excepting only the professional studies, such as Law, Theology, Medicine.

Another consequence of the new system was the imperative demand it made for new teachers. A prescribed curriculum (since it forces each of its courses upon the untalented as well as upon the specially gifted) must always remain more or less elementary. But those who are following their particular bent in the selection of their studies want to get beyond that stage. They want to penetrate beneath the mere surface into the very heart of the subject. They want to participate in the task of investigation. They want to win their own point of view by independent effort. Hence a constantly growing demand upon the methods of instruction. The elective system automatically eliminates the mere teacher; it inevitably brings to the fore in

every field of study the creative scholar, the investigator.

With like certainty the system reacts upon the student. He is no longer a schoolboy; he enters upon the higher life of intellectual freemen. What gives to all advanced instruction its life-blood, is the learner's own interest. Now it was left to everybody to turn to those things which appealed to his natural inclination, or to discover by actual trial the direction of his particular talents. This could not but result in a higher intensity of intellectual life.

His greater intellectual independence endowed the student with a correspondingly greater dignity. It was not possible to apply to him in his changed condition the same rigid and paternalistic discipline as to the former schoolboy. Liberty, self-control, self-government were given a freer scope: another point of resemblance to the German university student. The full and grateful appreciation of this change finds its expression in an address signed by 9300 Harvard men and presented to President Eliot on his seventieth birthday (March 20, 1904). We quote the following

passage: "You have held firm from the first that teacher and student alike grow strong through freedom. Working eagerly with you and for you are men whose beliefs, whether in education or religion, differ widely from your own, yet who know that in speaking out their beliefs they are not more loyal to themselves than to you. By your faith in a young man's use of intellectual and spiritual freedom you have given new dignity to the life of the college student."

All of this is bound up with the unrestrained liberty of the elective system. It cannot be denied that its universal application was not wholly without unhealthy consequences, and that the objections and misgivings it has aroused are not even to-day entirely silenced. But the difficulties and criticisms it has to contend with apply to every system extending academic freedom to the choice of studies; their weight will be the greater the less uniformly disciplined and prepared the students are at the time of their matriculation. Discipline and liberty in the realm of education bear to each other the relation of premise and conclusion.

Hence misgivings will be stronger in a country which, in respect to its school-system or systems, has not yet ceased to betray its character as a land of pioneers.

So much is certain, however: without that basic principle of President Eliot's reforms there could have been no progress. For let it be remembered that Harvard College, in its new liberty and breadth of spirit, became the preparatory institution for all higher professions. It was here that the future business man as well as the prospective physician, minister, lawyer, engineer, etc., received the fundamental equipment of a broader scholarship. This, to say the least, opens the way toward the attainment of an unusually high level of general culture before a man's special training for his actual profession sets in. It promises an extraordinarily thorough permeation of all higher professional endeavors with the academic spirit.

## III

### THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS UNDER ELIOT'S ADMINISTRATION

But the development of the professional schools and their establishment upon the foundation of a completed college course could be the result only of long-protracted, patient labors, beset, but never discouraged, by frequent trials and perils. It would take us too far afield to trace the gradual progress through all its successive stages. The aim remained throughout the same: a higher standard of requirements and of work actually performed, the constant enlargement and perfection of the curriculum, the introduction of searching examinations in place of an easy and practically automatic system of credits. To begin with, in the college proper the desired higher intellectual life would have remained without incentive or stability, had not the college in all of its departments — which in their aggregate may be roughly compared to the philo-

sophic *Fakultät* of a German university — made possible the pursuit of strictly scientific, independent, special professional studies. So far the only degree following that of Bachelor of Arts had been that of Master of Arts. This higher degree had been conferred, without examination or any other test of eligibility, upon those graduates of the college, who, after the completion of their college course, had irreproachably lived in Cambridge for a period of three years. This, then, was an extreme case of the automatic conferment of honors which became impossible with the establishment of a genuine university, and hence this was the first time-honored tradition to fall before the attack of the reform movement. As early as 1872 the automatic attainment of the Master of Arts degree gave way to an examination demanding proof of independent systematic studies. This, in turn, necessitated a more and more complete equipment of the department for graduate study, a development which, carried on by untiring effort, did not pass out of the experimental stage into anything like a formulated system until the year

1890. That year saw the foundation of a special Graduate School for Arts and Sciences. But, of course, the instructors in this school for scholars were, for the larger part, identical with those in the college proper, and, as a result, instruction within the latter fell more and more into the hands of real investigators. Hence the erection of a Chinese wall between the College and the Graduate School was unthinkable from the start. With the exception of highly advanced courses for small classes of specialists, the Graduate School opened its lectures to undergraduates as well. This tended to obscure those class-lines which, until that time, had been so sharply emphasized by the traditional old college course. All the different groups of students were now equally benefited by the stimulating and consolidating effect of a common interest in scholarly pursuits.

Equally inevitable was the disappearance of those artificial barriers which had so far surrounded the courses in natural science. These had been organized into a separate school which exacted but moderate entrance require-

ments and conferred the degree of Bachelor of Science after only three years of study. Hence its degree was rated inferior to that of A.B. Its work consisted in a one-sided drill in natural science and in technics. To anticipate the result of a reorganization not as yet wholly concluded: the Lawrence Scientific School will disappear as an undergraduate department of the university, and will become coördinate with the Graduate Schools by exacting the same entrance requirements and by applying the same high standard to its final degree. This, then, will mark but another entrance of the spirit of true scholarship into a field so far given over to a mere practical training and drill. The lines of demarcation between the schools will vanish, and every department of the university will be open to every student under the same conditions.

As to the professional schools of Medicine, Divinity and Law, the ultimate goal has already been defined. They too were to be changed into schools for graduates only, that is to say, they were to presuppose and require from their students the previous completion of

the college course. We need but remember the low grade of their former entrance requirements in order to realize the extraordinary advancement and improvement in the character of their students. But this was further followed in each of these schools by the unceasing perfection of their own curricula and by correspondingly higher exactions for their final degree. This particular phase of the reform made the very highest demands upon the energy and courage of the president, who, as must not be forgotten, was, throughout this era of internal changes, responsible as well for the purely external success and growth of his university. In every instance he was faced by the problem of completely recasting old forms; it was not the nature but only the extent of the task that differed in the several cases.

Let us now turn to each of the professional schools the general development of which has just been characterized. We begin with the Divinity School. Since 1886 it has been a graduate school for students of theology, while until that time it had been little more than a drill ground for prospective preachers, and of

doubtful value even as such. Now it became an academy of research in the extensive field of theology, ranking fully as high as any other department of the university. On the basis of a comprehensive examination it dismisses its students, after three years' study, with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. Having formerly been regarded as a strictly Unitarian institution, it has now long since surrendered its denominational character. Its professors may belong to any Protestant church. It has become an institution dedicated to the science of theology and to unbiased research.

Nowhere have President Eliot's courageous reforms met with a finer reward than in the development of the Law School. It meant a considerable sacrifice of attendance when this institution, formerly little more than a big law office, was made over into an advanced school of jurisprudence and, after continually adding to its entrance requirements, finally, in 1896, assumed the strict character of a graduate school. As such, however, it has not only served as a model for the whole country, but has now become, even in point of attendance,

one of the strongest departments of the university. A decisive step was that complete reform in method of instruction marked by the introduction of the so-called case-system, an exposition of which hardly lies within the scope of this article. The work of the Law School covers three years now, instead of the former two, and culminates in comprehensive annual examinations.

The Medical School, since 1900 open to graduates only, has not yet fully recovered from the unfavorable reaction of this reform upon its attendance. But nowhere has the reform of method and management been more thoroughgoing, and nowhere was it more urgently needed. Its students, after receiving in the college their general education and training in the natural sciences, have to submit to a rigid examination after each year's course. The whole instruction which, in the former exceedingly easy three years' course, was almost entirely theoretical, now aims to give the student, through extensive work in the anatomical institute, in the laboratories and clinics, a practical mastery of his science.

With the four departments we have now discussed, corresponding to the four *Fakultäten* of the German university, the evolution of the American university was by no means concluded. Unlike its German sister, it is an organic growth putting forth new shoots in constant development. The further extension of Harvard University involved in part merely the development of institutions already existing, but rather indefinable as to their exact character; other branches, however, were of entirely new creation. Thus the School of Agriculture, called the Bussey Institute, was newly organized as an advanced school for specialists in Applied Biology and as such became a part of the Graduate School of Applied Sciences created in 1906. Until that time the technical arts had not been given their proper place at Harvard. That this defect could be remedied was due to a large endowment given for this purpose. The Science of Engineering, taking this term in its widest sense, has found its place in this school of Applied Sciences which, again, is open to graduates only. The last creation is that of the Graduate School of

Business Administration. It is intended as an advanced training school for the future leaders of American industry and commerce. It likewise exacts the college degree as an entrance requirement, that is to say, before its students receive their special training in Political Economy, Commercial Law, Public Business, etc., they have covered what would correspond to about two years of study in the philosophic *Fakultät* of a German university. In addition to those we have mentioned there are some smaller institutions connected with Harvard University which we will pass by as being of less importance.

Thus then the American university idea developed with steadily increasing surety of aim. If there had once been justification for James Bryce's remark, that Harvard was no real university, but only a struggling college with uncertain relations to learning and research, loosely tied to a congeries of professional schools, now, certainly, its university character was clearly defined. As between the American university and the English college there is this point of difference, that the former, like the

German university, is the home of advanced study and investigation, and, as such, a training school for the learned professions. On the other hand, the American university differs from the German university in this, that, unlike the latter, it bases its advanced work not on the preparation received in secondary schools, but on that furnished by the college, which already in itself, as a school for "academic citizens," cultivates the university spirit and serves the noble purpose of raising its men to the level of a truly liberal and general education. The professional schools are to receive their students from the college as men of culture and are to dismiss them as trained specialists. The American university keeps its eyes everywhere to meet each newly arising demand of American life with a new species of scientifically trained men. It must never for a moment forget its responsibilities as the recognized home of knowledge and culture in a democracy; it must constantly demonstrate its indispensability to the intellectual and moral needs of the whole nation.

The work President Eliot set out to do could

not be accomplished by the decrees of an absolute monarch. His, on the contrary, was the task of incessant, laborious persuasion. In true American fashion he relied so much upon free and unrestricted discussion as the vital element of all constructive work that he actually called into life advisory bodies if such were lacking in any field of his labors. Thus he created the Academic Council, which, in the years of contest, comprised the president and practically the whole professorial staff of the university. By first forming such representative bodies as this, he gradually combined the living parts of the university in one harmonious organism. The Medical School, which had been something like a private domain of its professors, had to let its whole financial management pass into the hands of the corporation, the governing body of the university. The Law School was given a regular faculty and regular faculty-meetings (since September, 1870). The separate schools which gradually coalesced with the college were, together with the Graduate School for Arts and Sciences, put under the immediate care of the Faculty of Arts and

Sciences. Almost without exception, President Eliot has presided over all the faculty meetings in the various departments of the university. It is in these that educational policies are determined. The general administration of the university as a whole lies in the hands of the Corporation, which, accordingly, we may compare to a German Ministry of Education (*Kultusministerium*), with this difference, however, that the six members who, in addition to the President and the Treasurer of the University, constitute the corporation, hold their positions as posts of honor, without pay. The revisory body of Overseers, made up of alumni and elected by the alumni of the university, does not find its parallel in the German university, since the latter does not, like the endowed American university, ultimately rely for its whole material, intellectual and moral progress on the active interest and affectionate attachment of its former students. The president of such a university may then be said to combine in his person the functions of the German *Kultusminister* (secretary of education) and of the German *Rektor*,

besides being president of all the various faculties.

The remarkable growth of Harvard is evidenced by the constant erection of new buildings. Numerous new dormitories were necessary to provide accommodations for the increasing number of students. New homes, laboratories, auditoriums, had to be erected for the departments of Physics, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Architecture, Applied Sciences, etc. Some of the latest additions are the buildings of the Law School and of the Medical School. The latter has now actually for the second time in its history moved into entirely new quarters. Its recently completed buildings, than which Harvard owns none more splendid, are perhaps the finest of their kind anywhere. Built from top to bottom of white marble, glass and steel, they present the severe beauty of Greek lines. Another monumental structure, Memorial Hall, contains the assembly-room of the university (Sanders Theatre) and an immense dining-room at whose tables a large part of the student body gather three times a day in pleasant compan-

ionship. Among many other new buildings are the gymnasium and the boathouse. The older structures have almost all been remodeled and enlarged. Such a growth, to be sure, puts the very heaviest strain on the financial administration of the university, and, indeed, there has been no lack of serious difficulties. For three years in succession, 1903, 1904, 1905, the authorities had to struggle with heavy deficits. But never for a moment did their courage and confidence fail them. It was one of the guiding principles of university policy, to make every new income immediately fruitful by the establishment of another chair or by some other improvement of the institution's equipment. In the very days of general business depression a proclamation of the president called upon alumni and friends for an urgently-needed contribution of two and a half million dollars toward the salary fund of the university. Up to the present time 2,200,000 dollars have already been paid in, while 88,000 more have been promised. It was during periods of similar difficulties (1900 and 1904), that the university ventured upon two

such large undertakings as the summer schools for the teachers of Cuba and Porto Rico. The annual report of the president states with absolute frankness the general condition, the purposes and the needs of his institution. The confidence which such an insight into the affairs of the university inspires in the ranks of its alumni and friends forms the very best appeal to their unwavering, generous support.

In order to substantiate and complete our short history of the growth of Harvard University, we will now, for a moment, yield in good American fashion to the fascination of figures and numbers. The total registration of students in 1869 was 1043. In the present academic year (1908–09) the number is 3918. Taking only the college proper, its attendance in 1869 was 529 as against 2238 in the present year. Of instructors there were 63 in 1869, now there are 623. Forty years ago there was one teacher to each 16.5 students, while at present the proportion is 1 to 6.41. To such an extent has instruction been expanded, individualized and specialized. The Law School had three professors in 1869, now it

has a teaching staff of 16. Incidentally we may here note the interesting fact that previous to the reform of the Harvard Law School no such thing was known in English speaking countries as a man's devoting himself exclusively to the teaching of law as his regular and only profession. The Medical School, at the former date, had a teaching force of 19. At present the faculty alone numbers 56 without counting assistants and teaching fellows; with these added, the total comes up to 161. The Divinity School had four professors, of whom two were clergymen. It now has 17 teachers. The total number of books in the various libraries has risen from 168,000 to 803,800, not including pamphlets or maps. A very conservative estimate places the capital invested in buildings at seven million dollars. The active capital of the university amounted to 2,257,989 dollars on Aug. 31st, 1869; it has grown to 19,892,649 dollars on July 31st, 1907. For the last twelve years endowments and bequests have averaged at least 1,400,000 dollars annually. The total income in 1869 was 212,388 dollars, in 1907 it was 1,827,788

dollars, not counting a gift of 165,791 dollars for immediate use. It is not without interest to note that the total revenues of the athletic association of the university amounted in the academic year 1907–08 to 127,318 dollars, of which 101,227 were expended.[1]

[1] The most important source of the history of Harvard University in the period with which we have concerned ourselves is found in the President's annual reports referred to above. At the time of the 25th anniversary of President Eliot's assumption of office the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, in its second volume, published an excellent article by Professor Dunbar about the development of Harvard during the preceding quarter of a century (June number, 1894), with valuable supplementary statements about the Law School and the Medical School in particular, and accompanied by most interesting comparative notes by the editor, W. R. Thayer. All of this was reprinted by the same publication in its March number of the present year with an excellent continuation by Prof. F. W. Taussig, which brings the history of Harvard under President Eliot's administration down to the present time.

## IV

### ELIOT'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The creator of this new American university has always made it a point to explain and urge his ideas and convictions publicly. It is very characteristic that by far the larger part of Eliot's writings consist of public addresses afterwards printed. In a democracy the spoken word is the normal means of disseminating ideas aiming to influence the whole community. In this, then, Eliot's practice is typical of republican institutions. Taken as a whole his speeches not only give us his peculiar confession of faith as an educator. They discuss the problems of education in their intimate relation to American ideals. They powerfully champion educational reform as a public interest. They reveal throughout a mind not so much philosophical as practical. They express those convictions which were the propelling force in all of Eliot's organizing labors. Hence it is but natural that first

among his writings come his essays on educational reform, that these are followed by a volume setting forth the ideals of American democracy, and that the book on university administration, representing, as it were, the final yield of wisdom gathered from the fields of his long labors, concludes for the present Eliot's career as an author.

The inaugural address of the young president in 1869 contains the program of his life. It voices a will determined upon a general reform of education, which, in America and England, it declares to be centuries behind the precepts of the best pedagogic thinkers. The question is not what to teach but how to teach. "With good methods we may confidently hope to give young men of twenty-five an accurate general knowledge of all the main subjects of human interest, besides a minute and thorough knowledge of the one subject which each may select as his principal occupation in life. To think this impossible is to despair of mankind." Without such an education there can be no such thing as an intelligent public opinion, the one indispensable condition of social

progress. What we must aim at is the inculcation of that right mental discipline which is the very essence of education and which expresses itself in keen observation, correct induction, sober imagination, unbiased and sane judgment. Science, in its origin, its acquisition and application, depends on the development of these faculties and not on the mere absorption of information. "The worthy fruit of academic culture is an open mind trained to careful thinking, instructed in the methods of philosophic investigation, acquainted in a general way with the accumulated thought of past generations, and penetrated with humility. It is thus that the university in our day serves Christ and the Church."

We have to break down the narrow walls of the traditional college and open to the student the realm of human knowledge in all of its variety. That means that the spirit of liberty must enter into his schooling. To do one's work under one's own and free responsibility is at the same time the best school of character. "The best means to put boyishness to shame is to foster scholarship and manliness."

The university ought to be the teaching place for all worthy youths and particularly for those among them that are poor. "What greater privilege than this of giving young men of promise the coveted means of intellectual growth and freedom? The angels of heaven might envy mortals so fine a luxury." "Thanks to the beneficent mysteries of hereditary transmission no capital earns such interest as personal culture." In golden words Eliot praises the value of the poor men of learning to the life of the whole community. "The poverty of scholars is of inestimable worth in this money-getting nation. It maintains the true standards of virtue and honor. The poor friars, not the bishops, saved the Church. The poor scholars and preachers of duty defend the modern community against its own material prosperity. Luxury and learning are ill bed-fellows." "Inherited wealth is an unmitigated curse when divorced from culture."

The young men trained in the university are to build up the aristocracy of America, not a stupid and pretentious caste founded on

wealth and birth and on the aping of European manners, but "the aristocracy which excels in manly sports, carries off the honors and prizes of the learned professions, and bears itself with distinction in all fields of intellectual labor and conduct: the aristocracy which in peace stands firmest for the public honor and renown, and in war rides first into the murderous thickets."

The address formulates the duty of all members of the university, of the various faculties as well as of the corporation and the president. But what is essential in all things is the breath of freedom, the absence of all narrowing limits of sect or politics. "An atmosphere of intellectual freedom is the native air of literature and science. This university aspires to serve the nation by training men to intellectual honesty and independence of mind. The corporation demands of all its teachers that they be grave, reverent and high-minded, but it leaves them, like their pupils, free. A university is built not by a sect but by a nation."

Of that ever active spirit of enterprise

demanded by the task of reform and extension he finds the source in the national character: it is a spirit which likes no prospect so well as that of difficulties to be overcome and labors to be done in the cause of learning and public virtue. This spirit is "the noble quintessence of the New England character, that character which has made us a free and enlightened people; that character which, please God, shall yet do a great work in the world for the lifting up of humanity."

The new president does not conceive his task as that of an autocrat. "A university is the last place in the world for a dictator. Learning is always republican. It has idols, but not masters." He conceives the university as an institution resting on the support of the whole community, upheld by public affection and respect. Herself a fostering mother, she draws strength and courage from the loyalty of her children. He conceives the university as serving the interests of the whole people through its readiness to attack every fresh problem such as the higher cultivation of the fine arts; through giving for all that it gets a

rich return of culture, poetry, piety; through fostering the sense of public duty, that great virtue with which republics stand and fall.[1]

It is Eliot's whole life-long way of thinking that speaks to us from this inaugural address of forty years ago. The goal for which he has always striven with unflagging effort is the true greatness of his people; never has he set up or countenanced false standards of greatness. "The true greatness of states lies not in territory, revenue, population, commerce, crops or manufactures, but in immaterial or spiritual things: in the purity, fortitude and uprightness of the people, in the poetry, literature, science and art which they give birth to, in the moral worth of their history and life. With nations as with individuals none but moral supremacy is immutable and forever beneficent."[2]

The first personal task devolving upon the new president now consisted in defining anew the idea of liberal culture. The old idea,

[1] From Inaugural Address as President of Harvard College, 1869. In *Educational Reform*, pp. 1 sqq.

[2] From Address at the Inauguration of Daniel C. Gilman, 1876. (*Educational Reform*, p. 39.)

which had but little use for anything outside of Latin, Greek and Mathematics, goes back to the Middle Ages or the sixteenth century, although, of course, in their present-day treatment those subjects are thoroughly modern. But the introduction of new subjects is unavoidable. First of all English must be given its place of absolute equality with the ancient languages, being, according to Eliot, the language of the greatest of all literatures, and of the historically most important of all nations. The same position of equality has further to be granted to German and French, not for reasons of mere practical usefulness but because of the greatness of their literatures and their indispensability to every advanced student. As to history, it certainly should be counted as one of the humanities as much as Greek and Latin. "If the humanity or liberality of a study depends upon its power to enlarge the intellectual and moral interests of the student, quicken his sympathies, impel him to the side of truth and virtue, and make him loathe falsehood and vice, no study can be more humane or liberal than history." Another

subject deserving a place in general education is political economy, for which a better name would be Science of the Health of Nations. It makes great demands on the intellect and is not a material or utilitarian subject, for it is full of grave moral problems and deals with many questions of public honor and duty. Last, but not least, we must accord to Natural Science equal rank with the other subjects of general education, provided it be studied in the right way, not merely from books but from the things themselves. Indeed, it is the "patient, cautious, sincere, self-directing spirit of Natural Science" which is now spreading to all the fields of human knowledge, and the influence of that spirit upon the shaping of modern life is enormous. It is "a study fitted to train noble faculties which are not trained by the studies now chiefly pursued in youth." It makes that "great addition to the enjoyment of life which results from an early acquaintance and constant intimacy with the wonders and beauties of external nature."

This new definition of the idea of general education involves a new curriculum combin-

ing with the minimum of obligatory subjects the earliest possible admission of the student to courses of his own choice. It further involves a reform and improvement of teaching methods. "The purposed modification of the present prescription of Greek and Latin for all boys who are to go to college will rid the Greek and Latin classes of unwilling and uncapable pupils." "The withdrawal of the artificial protection now given to the classics will cause the study of classical antiquity to rely upon a reasonable perception of its proper place amongst the studies which belong to a liberal education." "The classics, like all studies, must stand upon their own merits." "The artificial protection becomes impossible in universities which have no support from an established church or from an aristocratic organization of society, and where it would be so easy for the generations, if repelled, to pass the universities by." Thus the university would lose its directive influence upon valuable forces, it would be out of harmony with the great development of the country and would do injury to itself and to the country.

It is in this manner that President Eliot discussed, in the year 1884, all of those problems which in Germany have led to the abolishment of the so-called monopoly of the Gymnasium.[1]

With the same breadth of view, keeping his eyes on the ever-changing conditions of public life, did Eliot approach the principal problems of professional training for preachers and physicians. How far the old function of the American university has been modified, appears from the following bit of statistics. The proportion of clergymen to the whole number of graduates between the years 1766 and 1770 was 29 per cent in Harvard, 32 per cent in Yale, 45 per cent in Princeton: while from 1871 to 1876 it was only 5 per cent in Harvard, 7 per cent in Yale and 17 per cent in Princeton. The vigorous development of the other learned professions has all but wholly deprived the preacher of his former privileged position as almost the only teacher of the nation. But it is especially the modern press that has nowadays become the great means of disseminating education. In general, the authorities of old

[1] What is a Liberal Education? 1884, *ib.* pp. 87 sqq.

are ceasing to be, as the faith in authority declines. If there is one thing modern man has learned, it is to distrust all ex-cathedra teaching. The unquestioning acceptance of dogmatic statements has had its day. The weight of all authority has greatly diminished, and the sources of recognized authority are quite different from what they were a century ago. All of which has revolutionized the old religious views, and here one of the disintegrating forces has actually been the change of political convictions. The monarchic conception of God as the Lord of Hosts does not appeal to a people which sees in "our country," an immeasurably worthier object of devotion than any human potentate could be, and a better symbol of the infinite God. The welfare of the many has come to be recognized as the prime object and only legitimate aim of human government. The welfare of the elect few has come to be repudiated as a purpose of government. Only the intimate connection between such political convictions and the faith of a people can give vitality to its religious life. But the most important among all the influences that have

changed the old religious conceptions is that new spirit in dealing with the facts of nature that is being developed by our modern Natural Science. "This spirit seeks only the fact without the slightest regard to consequences: any twisting or obscuring of the fact to accommodate it to a pre-conceived theory, hope or wish, any tampering with the actual result of investigation, is the unpardonable sin. It is a spirit at once humble and dauntless, patient of details, drawing, indeed, no distinction between great and small, but only between true and false, passionless but energetic, venturing into pathless wastes to bring back a fact, caring only for truth, candid as a still lake, expectant, unfettered and tireless." "No other method of inquiry now commands respect. Even the ignorant have learned to despise the process of searching for proofs of a foregone conclusion. Apologetics have ceased to convince anybody, if they ever did." To this new standard of intellectual sincerity, of intellectual candor, the Protestant theologian and clergyman must rise. That standard seems to be wanting when one is expected to arrive at results fixed

from the start and to adhere to them for the rest of one's life. That diminishes the respect for the preaching profession and deters many a man of ability and independence from entering it.

But if this calling of the preacher is more difficult now than before, it has also become loftier. To preach to modern man is a task more urgent and yielding richer rewards than ever. Hence the profession ought to be even more attractive now. But to make it so a far more perfect training is imperatively needed. "Theological study, if it is to be respected by laymen, must be absolutely carried on with the same freedom for teacher and pupil which is enjoyed in other great departments of learning." Indeed, in no other field of learning is moral and material independence so indispensable as in this. Support by the funds of sectarian societies implies an obligation and attracts too many unfit elements. The preparation of the minister should comprise language courses, English Literature, Psychology, Political Economy, History, Natural Science: it should find its completion in such more

strictly professional studies as Philosophy of Religion and Systematic Theology: it should acquaint him with modern charitable and reformatory methods and prepare him for the contest of Christian society with licentiousness, intemperance, pauperism and crime. But in all of this it should never be forgotten that "the object to be held in view in training a young man for the ministry is the imparting of power, not of information." "The true spirit of research is the same in all fields, namely, the free, fair, fearless and faithful spirit of modern scientists." Preaching, once, before the art of printing, the most important task, should now only be a small part of a minister's duties: in all of these he should enjoy the fullest freedom of development. Neither should he be held in abject servitude to dogma, nor should he be forced to square himself with dogma by means of "creed-stretching and creed-blinking."[1]

Eliot's views about the training of the physician again place the strongest emphasis on the public duties medicine has to perform.

[1] On the Education of Ministers, *ib.* pp. 59 sqq.

For not only does the remarkable growth of this science, the development of so many new branches, such as diagnostics, bacteriology, aseptics, demand an ever so much more careful and thorough preparation, but its scope of work has been greatly widened by the important problems of hygiene, which prevents disease and creates healthy conditions of life for the whole community. To encompass this end, medicine has the further duty of enlightening the people by public advice and precept. The growing importance of medicine finds recognition in the increasing supervision and actual assumption by the state of medical labors. "The times are past when the church alone asked men to devote themselves passionately, disinterestedly and bravely to the service of their fellow-men. The medical profession now exhibits in highest degree these virtues." It is here that modern heroism is found. "Our nation sometimes seems tempted to seek in war — that stupid and horrible savagery — for other greatness than can come from vast resources, prosperous industries and extending commerce." "Would it might turn its ener-

gies and its longing for patriotic and heroic emotion into the immense fields of beneficent activity which sanitation, preventive medicine and comparative medicine offer it. There are spiritual and physical triumphs to be won in these fields infinitely higher than any which war can offer, for they will be triumphs of construction and preservation, not of destruction and ruin. They will be triumphs of good over evil and of happiness over misery." [1]

The same idea of educating man to the service of democracy determines Eliot's views about public education in the narrower sense of the term. He is constantly looking for the organic connection of the whole national system of education. The liberally educated, professionally trained specialist whom the university places at the service of the people must have received the right kind of instruction from his first day of schooling in order to reach his goal and to avoid a senseless waste of time. On the other hand, a high development of methods of instruction at the university will react upon the schools in determining the

[1] Medical Education of the Future, *ib.* pp. 344 sqq.

requirements their graduates have to meet on entering the university, for the university is no class institution, but one offering the widest possible scope of development to every promising talent, just as a school is a common teaching place for all the growing members of democracy. "Schools follow universities and will be what universities make them." With this view toward a uniform, democratic system of education, Eliot has always been particularly zealous in urging the reform of the public school, and has devoted to public school education the larger number of his pedagogic articles.

These, like Eliot's earlier writings, are entirely practical, setting forth definite proposals for the betterment of instruction in the public schools. As before, we turn from this purely practical application to the fundamental idea itself. Something must be wrong with the educational system of the nation, since the influx of students into the universities is far from keeping pace with the growth of population. According to the best authorities the population of the United States increases about one-third in every period of ten years, while

(in 1888, when Eliot made this comparison) the increase in the number of pupils in the colleges during the same period of time was only 22 per cent. Public education should not only satisfy but direct the needs of the country. Instead of that it is actually lagging behind. "Obviously there are serious hindrances affecting all the institutions"; but "accessibility of appropriate opportunity is the essence of democratic society."

The one true end of education should be "effective power in action." Hence we should not aim exclusively at "the storing up of information or the cultivating of faculties which are mainly receptive, discriminating or critical," but should develop "personal power in acting under responsibility." "The moral purpose of a university's policy should be to train young men to self-control and self-reliance through liberty."

This purpose necessitates the introduction of that elective system which has been discussed. The free choice of studies develops all varieties of individual talents to the very greatest intensification of personal power, to thorough ex-

pertness of each student in his own field, and it engenders respect for such expertness in any field. To produce such experts and to instil respect for expert judgment is one of the most urgent duties of the American university. For insufficient appreciation of the value of expert labor is one of the worst afflictions of American life.

Now it is this very same spirit that should find entrance into the public schools. They, too, should turn from the mere cramming of memory to the development of intellectual self-assertion and spontaneity. "American teaching in school and college has been chiefly driving and judging: it ought to be teaching and inspiring." In view of the greatness of the task of education which only the college can bring to completion, the preparatory work must be both shortened and enriched. This is made possible through the improvement of method. Hence there need be no fear of overburdening. It is not work that produces fatigue, but the want of interest and of conscious progress. "The best means to diminish strain is to increase interest, attractiveness and the

sense of achievement and growth." "Nothing is so fatiguing as dull, hopeless effort, with the feeling that, do one's best, one cannot succeed." The common type of text-books has just this fatal defect: "a complete lack of human interest and the consequent lack in the child of the sense of increasing power." "We are coming to accept the doctrine that no teaching is good which does not awaken interest in the pupil." The prevailing school-room ideal of attaining the greatest possible equality of results with all the members of a class is fundamentally wrong. What gives teaching its greatest charm for the teacher is, on the contrary, the discovery and recognition of individual differences. The pupils should leave the class with a greater divergence of achievements and interests than that with which they entered it. It cannot be our aim to sacrifice the best pupils to the poorest. The mobility of democratic society demands the full development of all individual talents. Another mistaken notion presents itself in those superfluous examinations compelling the pupil to hold in readiness all the knowledge he

has acquired. They aim at something wholly artificial; but "to introduce any artificial hardness into the course of training that any human being has to follow is an unpardonable educational sin." The school should mirror life itself in the difficulties with which it confronts the pupil. "In education the development and training of motives should be consecutive and progressive, not broken and disjointed." Herein lies one of the objections to whipping. "Permanent motives should be relied on from beginning to end of education, and this for the simple reason that the formation of habits is a great part of education." "Prudence, caution, emulation, love of approbation, — and particularly the approbation of persons respected and beloved, — shame, pride, self-respect, pleasure in discovery, activity, or achievement, delight in beauty, strength, grace and grandeur, and the love of power, and of possessions as giving power, . . . in moderation, they are all good, and they are available from infancy to old age." Lastly, it is the duty of the school to attain its intellectual results without detriment either to the physical

development of its students or to their joy in their everyday life. Thus "the plain fact is that there is community of interests and aims among teachers throughout all the grades." "I have never yet seen in any college or university a method of instruction which was too good for an elementary or secondary school. The alert, inspiring, winning, commanding teacher is just the same rare and admirable person in school and in college." To come up to such a standard, to be sure, the teaching profession needs both careful training and enlightened public support. Eliot, therefore, as the true statesman of education, has never failed to advocate with the whole weight of his personality the thorough training and testing of teachers, long tenure of office, appropriate salaries and pensions, indeed, everything assuring the teaching profession of freedom from solicitude, dignity, and public esteem.[1] It

[1] Teachers' Tenure of Office, 1879, *ib.* pp. 49 sqq. Liberty in Education, 1885, pp. 125 sqq. Can School Programmes be Shortened and Enriched? 1888, pp. 151 sqq. The Aims of the Higher Education, 1891, pp. 223 sqq. Undesirable and Desirable Uniformity in Schools, 1892, pp. 273 sqq. The Grammar School of the Future, 1893, pp. 303 sqq. The Unity of Educational Reform, 1894, pp. 315 sqq. The Function of Education in Democratic Society, 1897, pp. 401 sqq.

was primarily to meet the special needs of American teachers that, under his administration, Harvard University has out of small beginnings developed its exceedingly important Summer School of Arts and Sciences. This gives to all the teachers in the land the unrestricted opportunity to come into touch with academic life in America's leading university, and by thus increasing their intellectual efficiency as teachers, to contribute materially to the gradual uplift of their profession as well as of American schools. Since 1874 the total attendance at the Summer School has been 13,414 persons, of whom fully 8784 were teachers.

Thus we see that Eliot's whole thought is directed at constructing all the methods of universal democratic education. What is needed is to permeate the whole people in all its various members with the quickening leaven of every imaginable variety of education, but, at the same time, to train all alike to that way of thinking which alone makes democracies possible. Now, there is no better means of uplifting the democratic masses than the read-

ing of good books, for this continues education through self-education. Hence the school must implant the taste for good reading. "Fifteen minutes a day of good reading would have given any one of this multitude a really human life. The uplifting of the democratic masses depends on this implanting at school of the taste for good reading." As already pointed out, a further enduring result of the training received at school should be, especially in democratic communities, and, indeed, contrary to a far-spread American tendency, a universal "confidence in experts and willingness to employ them and abide by their decisions." But the most important function of education in a democracy should be "the firm planting in every child's mind of certain great truths which lie at the foundation of the democratic social theory." These are "the intimate dependence of each human individual on a multitude of other individuals, which increases with civilization and with the development of urban life"; "the obligation of the present generation to many former generations"; "the essential unity of a democratic

community, in spite of the endless diversities of function, capacity and achievement among the individuals, the essential unity in aim and spirit." Thus we realize "the familiar Christian doctrine that service rendered to others is the surest source of one's own satisfaction and happiness." "In a democracy the public functionary is not a master but a trusted servant." "The children should learn that the desire to be of great public service is the highest of all ambitions." "Since it is a fundamental object of a democracy to promote the happiness and well-being of the masses of the population, the democratic school should explicitly teach children to see and utilize the means of happiness which lie about them in the beauties and splendors of nature." "The school should be the vehicle of daily enjoyment, and the teacher should be to the child a minister of joy." "It should be a recognized function of the democratic school to teach the children and their parents how to utilize all accessible means of innocent enjoyment." "Finally, the democratic school must teach its children what the democratic nobility is." It is based on

"fidelity to all forms of duty which demand courage, self-denial, and zeal, and loyal devotion to the democratic ideals of freedom, serviceableness, unity, toleration, public justice, and public joyfulness." "Democratic nobility exists and must exist, if democracy is to produce the highest types of character"; it exists in "men and women of noble character, produced under democratic conditions by the combined influences of fine inherited qualities, careful education, and rich experience." "Mere wealth has no passport to the democratic nobility." To attain membership in it is a rightful ambition, but it can be won only through high intellectual and moral qualities. These assure everybody admission to its ranks. "There are, consequently, more real nobles under the democratic form of government than under any other." [1]

[1] See, for this whole chapter, *Educational Reform*, New York, The Century Co., 1905.

## V

### ELIOT'S SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY: THE IDEALS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Thus all the ideas of what we may call Eliot's educational philosophy reach out into his social philosophy, or, to use a more exact term, his philosophy of American democracy. A most remarkable thought of his connects the Middle Ages with ages still to come. "The system of public instruction should embody for coming generations all the virtues of the mediæval church. It should stand for the brotherhood and unity of all classes and conditions; it should exalt the joys of the intellectual life above all material delights; and it should produce the best constituted and most wisely directed intellectual and moral host that the world has seen."

Eliot has the very strongest faith in the rationality of democratic tendencies. To be sure, in counting up America's contributions to the civilization of the world, even such a

man as he betrays a little of that peculiar American provincialism which does not always justly estimate the achievements of other nations and which views some things as strictly American, to which other peoples may lay claim as well. He sees such contributions first in "the advance made in the United States, not in theory only, but in practice, toward the abandonment of war," and "the substitution of discussion and arbitration," second in "the thorough acceptance, in theory and practice, of the widest religious toleration," third in "the safe development of a manhood suffrage nearly universal," in the actual governing of the state through the votes of its citizens. He is not blind to the dangers of party government. But how much greater are the educational advantages of this institution! It effects "the combination of individual freedom with social mobility"; "it permits the capable to rise through all grades of society"; it creates the periodical interest of the voters in the discussion of grave public problems; it is of benefit even to those who administer the government, since they can maintain their

superiority, not through the exercise of any special privileges, but only through being superior; it enables the best citizens to wield far-reaching influence even though holding no office; it fosters throughout the many layers of society the inclination and ability to read good books; it inspires a joyful support as does no other form of government, and thereby engenders the strongest spirit of sacrifice. The fourth American contribution to civilization is found in the "demonstration that people belonging to a great variety of races or nations are, under favorable circumstances, fit for political freedom," and the fifth is "the diffusion of material well-being among the population." "They are all five essentially moral contributions, being triumphs of reason, enterprise, courage, faith and justice, over passion, selfishness, inertness, timidity and distrust."[1]

On the same foundation rests the hope that the American Republic will not share the fate of the republics of the past. "The mental and moral force which makes for the permanence

[1] Five American Contributions to Civilization. In *American Contributions to Civilization*, pp. 1 sqq.

of our institutions is universal education." This is an entirely modern principle, standing in absolute contrast, for instance, to Plato's idea. A further assurance of the permanence of the republic lies in the increasing gentleness and justice of family life; for "whatever regulates wisely the relations of the sexes and increases domestic happiness, increases also social and governmental stability." Furthermore, something entirely unknown to former ages presents itself in certain means of public happiness which have recently been liberally provided, at public expense, in many American communities, such as parks, museums, libraries, public sanitation, etc., all of them making for the permanence of free institutions. "Another new and effective bulwark of state is to be found in the extreme publicity with which all American activities are carried on." The development of the modern corporation teaches numberless members of society how to render service to a vast, organized whole. The extreme division of labor has brought about the consciousness of a mutual dependence of man on man and of community on community.

Hence "we no longer look on what is novel with suspicion and distrust." "Hope and expectation of good spring in our hearts, as never before in the hearts of former generations." All the old ideas about God, man, and the world are given a new direction by the abiding faith in a development toward better things. Thus "they contribute generously to the happiness and true spirituality of the people," another source of support for governmental stability. Religion itself no longer urges upon us the "conciliation of an offended God" and "the provision of securities for individual happiness in a future life"; its province is "to soften and elevate the characters and lives of men in this world."[1]

The same confidence in the future of democracy is commanded by its past showing. In each of the three great crises of American history — the question of independence of Great Britain, the question of forming a firm federal union, the question of maintaining that union, — "the only wise decision was arrived

[1] Some Reasons why the American Republic may endure, *ib.* pp. 39 sqq.

at by the multitude." Wonderful results, in all the fields of activity, have been obtained by voluntary, united effort for intellectual and moral ends, such as is seen in the successful establishment and support of religious institutions, in the maintenance, upon a purely voluntary system, of institutions like Harvard, and in many similar manifestations. We have already spoken of that "vast amount of intellectual and moral energy" which is trained to concerted effort in the service of corporations. In the same way "democracy is a training-school in which multitudes learn in many ways to take thought for others, to exercise public functions, and to bear public responsibilities." The financial system of America has never failed to work well. Nowhere has private property been more secure. But democracy is also the right soil for cultivating the refinements of life, for breeding true gentlemen and gentlewomen. The effectiveness of a hereditary transmission of culture through successive generations is already apparent in the America of to-day. Of far greater importance is the continued possibility of full development for

individuals of true innate nobility, and for this a mobile democracy furnishes much better conditions than the inbreeding which results from class differences. "Who has not seen in public and in private life American women unsurpassed in grace and graciousness, in serenity and dignity, in effluent gladness and abounding courtesy? Now, the lady is the consummate fruit of human society at its best. In all the higher walks of American life there are men whose bearing and aspect at once distinguishes them as gentlemen. They have personal force, magnanimity, moderation and refinement; they are quick to see and to sympathize; they are pure, brave, and firm." Such observations make it reasonable "to expect that science and literature, music and art, and all the finer graces of society will develop and thrive in America, as soon as the more urgent tasks of subduing a wilderness and organizing society upon an untried plan are fairly accomplished." [1]

A cheerful optimism is the wellspring of all

[1] The Working of American Democracy, 1888, *ib.* pp. 69 sqq. Family Stocks in a Democracy, 1890, *ib.* p. 135.

of these ideas, but it is not the optimism of the average American, with its frequent superficiality and excessive self-confidence. Eliot's optimism rests on the consciousness of large reserve power and on an unfailing discernment of things as they are. He dislikes the morbid modern tendency to exaggerate social evils, and combats it in a delightful essay in which he sets forth the thoroughly healthy and simple life of the little community where he has his summer home, as typifying the life of from thirty to forty million Americans. On the other hand he is by no means blind to such shortcomings of democracy as have hitherto appeared. He has been a zealous advocate of municipal reform, recommending the employment of experts with long tenure of office instead of the constant rotation in office of mere politicians. Nor does he, the great champion of universal education, shut his eyes to the disappointments with which it has so far been attended. For relief from these he relies on improved methods, aiming more at developing the powers of judgment than at stuffing the brain with sterile matter. Nothing can shake

his confidence in democratic principles. But these must be correctly understood as making, not for mechanical equality, but for the unity in spirit of the most diverse individual gifts, each of which must be given its own possibility of development. This is "the real end to be attained in social organization." "Civilization means infinite differentiation under liberty." The French ideal, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," must give way to the Anglo-Saxon ideal, "Freedom, Unity, Brotherhood." With this attainable ideal to point the way, Eliot is a preacher of the Happy Life who knows how to lead modern men to the sources of happiness. These flow more amply for those of simple life than for the very rich, who only through loving service can find the path to happiness and to the kingdom of God upon earth. It is in a peculiarly fascinating retrospect from his serene, wholly sublunary world upon the first beginnings of Puritan society in his beloved New England, that this true scion of the Puritans points out the complete failure of their hierarchy and yet lays grateful stress upon the unity of spirit in American history. He

honors those men for that devotion to the ideal which makes them the fathers of democracy; at the same time he is happy to know that their one great object of devotion, the church, is in a more natural and secure position to-day than ever it was.

To Eliot all his labors are but one long service to democracy. He has always been found at his post when his democratic idea of university development was under attack. When hostile legislation threatened to deprive the university of its exemption from taxes, he entered the lists with a masterful memorial, as the champion of his great fundamental ideas: the voluntary assumption of public duties, which otherwise would fall upon the state, the unrestricted encouragement of the joy of voluntary giving, the unobstructed development of that public spirit in private citizens which is the mainstay of republican institutions.[1]

[1] The Forgotten Millions, 1890, *ib.* pp. 103 sqq. One Remedy for Municipal Misgovernment, 1891, pp. 173 sqq. Wherein Popular Education has failed, 1892, pp. 203 sqq. Equality in a Republic, 1896, pp. 161 sqq. The Happy Life, 1895, pp. 245 sqq. Present Disadvantages of Rich Men, 1893, pp. 291 sqq. Why We Honor the

Thus our discussion of Eliot's labors continually brings us back to his beloved university, which is, after all, the one great achievement of his life. All of his extensive public activity and social thought finds its explanation in this, that the President of Harvard University is, and must be, in the fullest sense of the term, a man in public life. The conclusion of the last book that has so far issued from Eliot's pen summarizes the functions and purposes of such a university as he has created. We quote his words as a fitting close to our present chapter: "Any one who makes himself familiar with all the branches of university administration in its numerous departments of teaching, in its financial and maintenance departments, its museums, laboratories, and libraries, in its extensive grounds and numerous buildings for very various purposes, and in its social organization, will realize that the institution is properly named the university. It touches all human interests, is concerned with

Puritans, 1886, pp. 355 sqq. The Future of the New England Churches, 1880, pp. 347 sqq. The Exemption from Taxation, 1874, pp. 299 sqq.

the past, the present, and the future, ranges through the whole history of letters, sciences, arts and professions, and aspires to teach all systematized knowledge. More and more, as time goes on, and individual and social wealth accumulates, it will find itself realizing its ideal of yesterday, though still pursuing eagerly its ideal for to-morrow." [1]

[1] *University Administration*, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1908, p. 254. See, for this whole chapter, American Contributions to Civilization, New York, The Century Company, 1907.

## VI

### ELIOT'S LIFE, PUBLIC ACTIVITIES, PERSONALITY

Charles William Eliot was born on the 20th of March, 1834. His father, Samuel Atkins Eliot, was treasurer of Harvard College from 1842 to 1853. Thus in his early boyhood he became, as it were, a member of the college household. Besides, as the scion of an old and distinguished New England family, he belonged to what in Boston, and especially outside of Boston, in a tone of mingled irony and reverence, is styled the Brahmin caste of New England. He studied in Harvard, of course. From 1854 to 1858 he served his Alma Mater as tutor in Mathematics, and from 1858 to 1861 as assistant professor in the same science. Then he went over to Chemistry and taught this subject as assistant professor from 1861 to 1863. From then till 1865 he travelled in Europe, studied Chemistry in France, Germany and England and acquainted

himself with the educational methods of these countries. It must, however, be acknowledged that the general impression of the German intellectual life, outside of the strictly scientific sphere, can hardly have been deep with him. Indeed, it is one of the characteristics of his intellectual physiognomy that he remained such a stranger to the inner German life. Neither his labors nor his thoughts betray a touch of Goethe; and what might remind us of Kant is but that spirit of rigid Protestantism which connects Kant with Puritanism. While in Rome, in 1865, he was invited to a highly important leading position in one of the great industrial establishments of Massachusetts. He declined, and accepted instead the far less remunerative post of Professor of Analytic Chemistry in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. In 1867 he made another trip to Europe. Two years later he was inaugurated as President of Harvard University, with which, except for the last few years just previous to his assumption of office, he had already been connected all his life.

The mighty task of university organization fills the next decades. This labor, by itself, was in every sense a service to the whole nation. But hardly had the new structure assumed shape in its essential features when President Eliot entered upon a most lively participation in all the great political and social questions of America, and developed more and more into a moving force in the national life of his country. In 1890 he became chairman of the Committee of Ten, an association made up of leading men in all fields of education and engaged in elaborating plans of reform and organization for the American schools. Its exposition of principles and demands was worked out in a number of sub-committees and published in a comprehensive report. Regular meetings of the various branches of the teaching profession were called into life. A new spirit now entered the schools and brought them more and more into unity of organization and purpose; while the influential President of Harvard incessantly urged the indispensable increase of public appropriations. About the same time the disputes between capital and labor became

from year to year more threatening. Since 1902 Eliot has again and again raised his voice in protest against this bitter struggle. Defying, in his fearless frankness, the tyranny of the labor unions, he declared the "scab" a modern type of hero, and denounced that tyranny as the worst danger to American liberty since 1775. But, of course, so far from intensifying the quarrel, he worked for a better understanding between the warring interests by urging them to adjust their differences in mutual good will and not to sacrifice the common weal to the impossible demands of one-sided partisanship. Nowhere was the weakness of America's political system so glaringly patent as in the misgovernment of its cities. Here the very honor of democracy was at stake. Eliot appealed to the general interest of the people by demonstrating that no one suffers worse from municipal misrule than the citizen of small income. He advocated administration by small commissions of experts with long tenure of office, and he inspired the first trial of this plan in two New England cities. Influenced by one of his sons, and combining

considerations of beauty with those of public health, he again and again called upon the cities to lay out municipal parks and gardens as breathing-spots for their people. Only last year, while the liquor question was such a burning issue in many of the states, President Eliot deeply impressed the country by announcing, at the age of 74 years, his conversion to total abstinence. The people have come to expect to hear from President Eliot in every great question of American life, and when he speaks, America listens.

The unity of purpose pervading this extensive activity is easily discovered. The university is to act as the great storehouse for the best intellectual and moral forces in the national life. It should be not only the brain, but also the ever active conscience of the country. In the university the responsibility of the whole national life should find its full expression. Hence the public activity of the university president is a necessity. Education, so understood, becomes a part of national politics in its best sense. The governing principles of education grow into ideals of

national life. The lofty idealism which owes to Eliot its ascendency over all merely utilitarian considerations, as the highest maxim of the university, has, through this, become the one great loadstar of national life. "Truth and right are above utility in all realms of thought and action." The last and most essential element of all worthy education he defines as "the steady inculcation of those supreme ideals through which the human race is uplifted and ennobled, — the ideals of beauty, honor, duty and love." It is not merely their service to the advancement of this or that profession that commends universities. "Their true and sufficient ends are knowledge and righteousness." This is the spirit of his labors as president and of his active interest in all national problems; and it is through this spirit that he has won the reverence of the whole country, not merely as the president of the greatest university, nor, as has very prettily been said, as the president of all American universities and schools, but as the great citizen, — "the greatest citizen of the United States."

The life of this good and faithful servant has

not been without its sore afflictions. In the very year when he entered upon his great office, he buried the beloved wife of his youth, Ellen Derby Peabody. New domestic happiness came to him in his union, since 1877, with Grace Mellen Hopkinson. But in 1897 he suffered another cruel blow in the death, at the age of only thirty-seven years, of his son Charles, a man of unusual talents, who after thorough studies at Harvard had invented for himself the profession of landscape gardener, something then almost new in America. To this "lover of nature and of his kind, who trained himself for a new profession, practised it happily and through it wrought much good," the bereaved father erected a beautiful monument of paternal devotion: a stately volume as a memorial gift "for the dear son who died in his bright prime from his father."[1] The artistic sense which reveals itself in the charming freshness of his descriptions of nature and which found creative expression in his professional labors, had come to him from his delicate and beautiful mother, who, like him, had died so young in years.

[1] *Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect*, 1902.

But it is the father who is suggested to us by the organizing clearness and determination and by the truly statesmanlike spirit, with which the son attained the realization of the ruling idea of his life in the greater public regard to the beauty of cities and towns. Thus he added to the happiness of his people and to the refinement of their joy in life. Indeed, it would almost seem to us as if the ideals of the son were reaching out beyond those of the father to a still later phase of American development. For the America of beauty must come after the America of the mind, just as this must succeed to the America of wealth and power.

Of unusually tall, slender, erect stature, Eliot has still, at the age of seventy-five years, the muscular bearing of a youth, without the slightest suggestion of infirmity. In his undiminished vigor and clearness of mind he can still cope with the youngest of his staff. Only recently, in the closing months of his career as president, he has undertaken two most extensive trips to the West and the South, frequently travelling all night, and delivering addresses every day, in order to win, by the appeal of living speech,

new supporters for the Harvard idea. Now that he is about to retire from his office, nobody is suggesting the idea of a well-earned rest. The only question is to which field of public activity he will from now on devote his labors.

Eliot's life has been a life of struggle. In the first decades of his presidency of Harvard he had to overcome the united resistance of all adherents of tradition. By his fearless frankness of speech he has again and again given offence, now to one, now to another class of people. Indeed, there were those who would see in him only a ruthless autocrat. Furthermore, with the increasing extension of the University, he held himself more and more aloof from contact with the actual life of its students. The traditional patriarchic relation between president and students came to an end. He was not the father confessor, but the statesman of Harvard; not, as it has been well put, its Secretary of the Interior, but its Secretary of Foreign Affairs. But soon the absolute unselfishness of his policy became apparent. It was seen how sincerely he relied

on the most general and detailed discussion to clarify matters, and how gladly he acknowledged the work done by his large staff of co-workers, how unreservedly he executed majority decisions even when he was at variance with them. Then there was the growing admiration for his amazing power of work. A permanent secretary actually had to be forced upon him; he would have much preferred to do everything alone. The student body gradually came to take deep pride in their president. Nobody could resist that revelation of truest nobility and kindness when, more than thirty years ago, a student was taken with small-pox, was refused admission by every hospital, and President Eliot removed his own family to receive the afflicted man into his home. Nobody but knew how secure at all times the honor of Harvard was in President Eliot's keeping. Who could forget that recent exchange of telegrams between him and President Roosevelt! Two students, members of the two university boat crews which were just then making ready for the annual contest with Yale, had been suspended for a serious viola-

tion of the University rules, and this dropped them from their crews almost on the eve of the race. The victory over Yale, until then joyfully and confidently expected, was put in question. An extraordinary excitement took hold of alumni and students, and turned against Eliot. Then President Roosevelt and First Assistant Secretary of State Bacon, both of them loyal Harvard men, telegraphed to Eliot expressing their astonishment at the severity of the punishment and asking him to modify it so as to permit the men to row. Eliot telegraphically declined the request, "since the finest sense of honor was the best fruit of college education, and since both men did a dishonorable thing." Now that hostile attitude was reversed into gratitude to the man of unflinching courage. As the student paper, the "Crimson," declared on Eliot's seventieth birthday, "we are proud of him and glad of him, and to him we accord the reverence that even the worst of us in his heart feels for the good and great." Let us add to this a quotation from that address of Harvard men he received on the same day: "Your outward

reserve has concealed a heart more tender than you have trusted yourself to reveal. Defeat of your cherished plans has disclosed your patience and magnanimity and your willingness to bide your time. Fearless, just and wise, of deep and simple faith, serene in affliction, self-restrained in success, unaffected by any manner of self-interest, you command the admiration of all men and the gratitude and loyalty of the sons of Harvard." Some of the objections to Eliot's policies will remain and perhaps assert themselves in the further history of the University. But what bitter feeling against him once existed has long since been changed to reverence and unbounded confidence. Eliot once said: "Better than devotion to an idealized person is devotion to a personified ideal." The "Harvard Bulletin," an alumni publication, applied these words to Eliot himself and called him the personified ideal of the American university.

Eliot does not rank with the world's greatest thinkers; he does not rank with those who, like Plato, like Kant, like Goethe, command their word to a thousand generations. He has not

conjured up from unfathomable depths new well-springs of life for mankind. He belongs essentially to America. Endowed with a most rational mind and with invincible energy, he has accomplished the evolution of Harvard into a genuine university in the European sense, while, at the same time, ever remaining true to his conception of education as a service to the whole people. He has created the atmosphere in which genuine scholarship can thrive upon American soil. He has put upon education the stamp of democracy. The former achievement was an adaptation to standards originating in other lands; the latter was wholly his own in origin and accomplishment. Whether his form of education will remain victorious in America only the future can reveal. But nothing can dislodge Eliot from his place in American history as the great statesman of American pedagogics, who, as the educator of his nation, has expressed in education the ideal of his people, the ideal of democracy.

If we now ask ourselves on what, ultimately, the confidence in Eliot, his place among his

people and his success rest, we must say it is his incessant striving for the good, it is the moral force he represents. Thus, then, he himself stands before us as one of those types which are the self-justification of democracy in its ideal conception as that form of society in which the forces voluntarily and of their own direction combine in mutual service and thus produce the living organism of society. Without federal or state office, he has been a force in national life wholly and only through the moral power which he represents. And, perhaps, this is the highest glory of America that here, probably more than anywhere, it is only the purely moral forces that gain the people's confidence, and command success.

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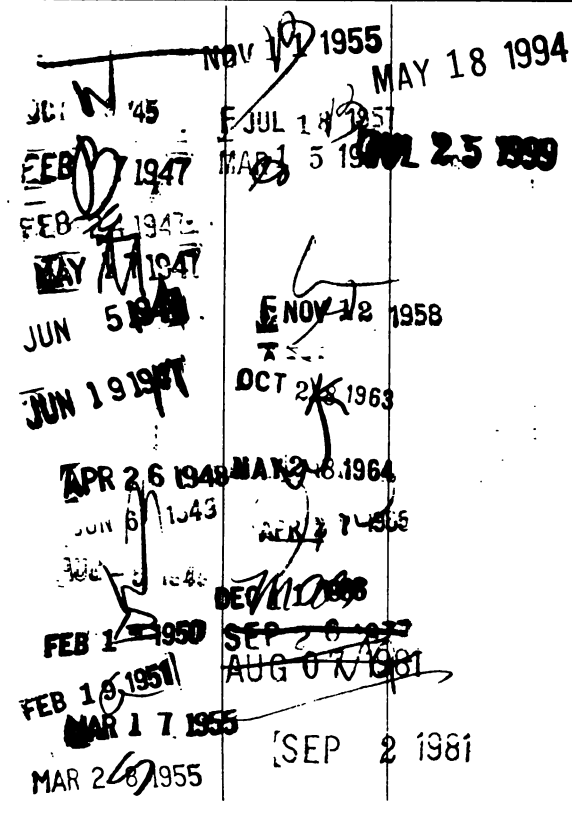

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